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Kuwait MI 1

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also a pearl diver. Pearling from Kuwait and Bahrein is carried on during the season of the hard southwest monsoon in the Indian Ocean, when the big dhows are laid up and there is no ocean sailing. It is therefore possible for the same men to carry on both callings, though in these days the seaman is becoming a little too enlightened to go off cheerfully to the purgatory of pearling.

MA 565 581 595

The seaman is also helped by his religion, by his interest in the seafaring life (which has a great appeal of its own) and the fine camaraderie about it, and in many cases by the delights of night life in such ports as Zanzibar and Bombay. If he has no harem of his own back in Kuwait, he is certainly no celibate at Zanzibar. He generally seems to manage a small home in Kuwait after a few voyages, depending upon his own business acumen and the general success of the dhow he serves in. Many *nakhodas* appear to maintain several.

MA 505 565

In addition to the merchants, *nakhodas*, and seamen, there is another class of importance in the dhow trade. These are the mates, the experienced officers who, never able to become *nakhodas* themselves because of an unacceptable financial status, very often have more to do with the actual sailing of the dhow than the *nakhoda*. Each big dhow carries at least one such experienced man. Sometimes he is of Iranian origin, and has been sailing since he could walk. Sometimes he is a Negro, member of a trusted ex-slave family, who lives with the *nakhoda* at home or has been brought up in his courtyard.

MA 505 565 439

He is always an able mariner, but he is not often trusted to trade. It is not at all uncommon for a *nakhoda*, on the usual East African voyage — which always begins with a long haul and long-winded peddling of dates round the coasts of Southern Arabia, and to Berbera and perhaps Djibouti — to leave the ship for considerable portions of the passage at sea, while he looks after her business interests ashore. For example, in one Kuwait dhow in which I had the good fortune to sail for some eight months, the *nakhoda* cheerfully left the ship at Aden and went on to Mukalla by steamer, to steal a march on the other shipmasters and scoop the cream — he hoped — from the passenger market. Again, he left the ship at Zanzibar, and his mate took her down to the delta of the Rufiji, hauled her out on the beach at Kwale Island south

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debts, odd earnings not shared and even odder earnings which were shared, and mysterious complicated procedures, some of which I never did fathom, for the war came, and stopped my investigations.

The son of the merchant family which owned our dhow, however, told me that her gross profit on the nine-month round voyage was 11,000 rupees, not including the proceeds of the crews' and officers' private ventures. But I think he exaggerated, for the total investment in the dhow was little more than that. But at any rate, the dhow's people were well satisfied and they all, save one, went back to sea with her. The *nakhoda* grew fat throughout the summer, and took a new wife, and a new *boom* for his brother at a cost of 10,500 rupees; and I heard no complaints from the merchants.

As far as I was able to discover, half the gross earnings went to the ship; this was the merchant's share. The cost of the food for the round voyage (which was not much, for all hands lived very simply and fishing lines were the most important equipment in what passed for her storeroom) was deducted from the other half, and the remainder was then divided by shares arranged strictly in accordance with the accepted value of each man's rating aboard. The sailor's share on the voyage which I made was reported to be 135 rupees (about $40), whereof 35 rupees had been advanced. This was little enough for such a long voyage, and though they worked hard at all sorts of things and were ready for any kind of business, I doubt whether a sailor's earnings from other sources amounted to more than 20 or 30 rupees, clear.

I heard of dhows from Kuwait that season which were distributing less than 100 rupees; according to the Kuwaiti, who had no high opinion of them, the Suri rarely paid out more than fifty. To a sailor whose only home was the sand of the *suq* and his bed the cloak around him, whose wants were few and whose paradise was assured, even 50 rupees may be a vast sum of money. There was, at any rate, contentment throughout the Arab shipping industry as I knew it, and the quiet philosophy I learned among the simple seamen was of great help to me in the days of the long-drawn war which was soon to follow.